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S E R M O N

P R E A C H ' D

Before the Sons of the Clergy at the
Cathedral-Church of *St. Paul*,
London, on the *26th* Day of
November, 1706.

By *R. ALTHAM*, D. D. Rector of *St. Botolph*
without *Bishopsgate*.

Published at the Request of the Stewards.

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Printed for *Philip Monckton* at the *Star* in *St. Paul's*
Church-Yard. 1706.

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A SERMON

PREACH'D, &c.

Galatians VI. 10.

*As we have therefore opportunity,
let us do good unto all Men, espe-
cially to those that are of the hous-
hold of Faith.*

IN these Words the Apostle commends
to us a peculiar Character of Christianity,
The Universality of Love, Kindness, and
Charity we ought to have for one another. By
the *Jews* all other Nations besides themselves,
were accounted Heathens and Infidels ; By the
Greeks

A Sermon preach'd before

Greeks and Romans all the rest of the World were thought *Barbarians*; and under these Characters were not deem'd worthy, either of their Care or Compassion. 'Tis a Gospel Charity alone, can extend it self, as far, and wide in all its Benefits and Advantages to Men, as the Principle of it its self is extended, *viz.* The Unbounded Love of God to Mankind.

The *Segullah*, i. e. The peculiar Privileges vouchsaf'd to the Jewish Nation, gave them such Narrow and Confin'd Notions of themselves, that they thought themselves the only Favourites of Heaven: For this the Lord does often chide them by his Prophets. Thus *Moses*, *Deut. Ch. 32. v. 21.* *They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God: They have provoked me to anger with their vanities: And I will move them to jealousy with those which are no people, in their Esteem. I will provoke them to anger with a foolish Nation, as They think them.*

These narrow Thoughts our Saviour reprehends by the Parable of the *Good Samaritan*; and this selfish Opinion did so far contract the Jewish Charity, that it led them even to the Neglect of that Natural Piety they owe
their

their Parents, whenever they could make a Præ-
tence of *Corban* for it, for which our Saviour
rebukes them, *Mark 7. 11.*

Since therefore 'tis a Christian Charity alone
which can truly answer the Nature and End
of that Duty, I shall upon this Solemn and
Opportune Occasion offer, to your Confide-
ration

I. The Universal Nature and Duty of
Charity. *As you have opportunity, do good
unto all Men.*

II. The Reason of the Apostle's Restriction
here, *Especially to Those of the household of
Faith.*

I. Of the Universal Nature and Duty of
Christian Charity.

Common Notions are too apt to confine the
Universal Nature and Duty of Charity to
the Particular Duties of Alms-giving and Re-
lieving the Poor and Distressed ; Now, though
the particular Duty of Alms-giving, and re-
lieving

lieving the Poor and Distressed, has a sufficient Foundation in the common Principles of Humanity ; For Pity and Compassion are Natural Affections which will move us upon the Discovery of any miserable Object ; and therefore is it upon that Principle very commendable. Nay, though in the common Esteem of Christian Practice, it seems to have engross'd to its self the whole Notion of Charity ; yet is Christian Charity in its true nature, a Vertue of much larger Extent. For St. Paul tells us, 1 Cor. 13. 3. *Though I bestow all my goods to feed the Poor, and have not Charity, it profiteth me nothing.*

There may be therefore a mistaken Principle to direct our Practice in this Duty : Or, there may be false Motives to lead us to it ; and when there are so, 'tis not a Christian Charity. A Pharisaical Ostentation may make us blow a Trumpet, to spread our own Fame amongst Men ; and when it does so, it gives us not God's Reward, but our own ; For when all the Aim and Design of the Action is intended only *To be seen of Men*, by this means we gain that *End*, and He who has all that he intended, has no reason to expect more.

Again,

Again, An over Superstitious Opinion of the Work may be sufficient to destroy the Charity of the Action, for our Saviour has taught us to believe, that when we have done All we can we are still to account our selves unprofitable Servants. There is nothing we can do, can Engage God to give us the Reward by way of Due; but we must acknowledge the Ability of the Performance to be owing to his Grace, the Reward of it to his Bounty.

And therefore Christian Charity must be a Principle of more Universal and extensive Influence than this or any other single Christian Duty can be. It must indeed be such a Principle as is able to Guide and rightly direct this and all other Christian Duties whatsoever, under which Notion we are now to consider it, as it is a Principle which has an Universal Influence upon all our Christian Duties.

When the Inquisitive Lawyer in the Gospel ask'd our Saviour *Which is the great Commandment?* Matt. ch. 22. v. 36. Our Saviour said unto Him, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all*
B *thy*

thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind. This is the First and great Commandment; and the Second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self. On these two Commandments hang all the Law, and the Prophets. A strict external Observance therefore of all the minutest Punctilio's of the Law, which this Lawyer boasted of, was not we see, in our Saviours account, a just Obedience to the Commandment, if that Obedience was not honestly directed by an Universal Principle of Love to God in the first place, and to our Neighbour in the Second.

And to shew us yet further the Universal extent of Christian Charity, when the same Lawyer, as it is recorded by *St. Luke ch. 10. v. 36.* ask'd our Saviour, *who is my Neighbour!* Our Saviour Answer'd him with the Parable of the Good Samaritan, to shew him, that though the *Jews* and *Samaritans* were such Nations as had no dealings with one another, yet in pitiable and compassionate Cases no distance, either of Country or Affections, was to hinder the Universal Influence of a *Christian Charity*.

From hence therefore we may learn what the true Foundation of Christian Charity in relation to our Brother is. It must not be built upon a vain Ostentation or design of gaining Praise and Esteem to our selves ; nor yet upon a bold presumption of any thing that may be Meritorious in the Action. It must not be confin'd to the narrow bounds of Kindred or Acquaintance ; but must be extended as far and wide, as is the Product of God Almighty's Love, the Universal race of Mankind, who because they are his Offspring, are therefore our Brethren, and by that means are by him constituted the Objects and Proxies of our love.

For if we consider, as St. *John* tell us, in his 1 *Ep. ch. 4. v. 16. that God is Love*. If we consider further that by Love we were Created, by greater Love we were Redeem'd, these considerations ought to be sufficient to convince us, That the Gracious Communication of such a Divine Principle must or should have a great and forcible Influence upon our Nature. It should excite and stir up our endeavour to Imitate that great love and kindness of our Maker in some

proportionable Communications of the like Love and Kindness to such as may stand in need of it from us. 'Tis the End for which that Principle was planted in us, 'tis what our Maker expects from us. And therefore when upon the natural Scheme they give it us as a Principle. *That Man is born a sociable Creature,* That Principle is really no more than the consequential Efficacy of the Communication of This divine Love and Goodness. That's the Inclination implanted in our nature to a mutual good Will, and to the Exercise of mutual good Offices. Thus far even the natural Scheme will lead us, and seems to lay a Reasonable and a Solid Foundation for an Universal, and Extensive Love and Charity.

But when we consider the Exalted Love of God in the Redemntion of Mankind; an Act of Love as much above our Merit, as it was beyond our Expectation, for nothing but the same Love which finish'd it, could possibly have design'd it; this will still give us further light and stronger Arguments to fix our Christian Charity upon a firm and true Foundation. For if we consider that it was Sin, which made the first Breach, not only between God and Us, but even amongst
our

our selves ; For from whence come Wars and Fightings among you ? says St. James ; Come they not hence, even from your Lusts that war in your Members ? Ch. 4. 1. The Consideration certainly of that Divine Love, which wrought the Reconciliation for Us with God, ought to heighten and Improve the like Love, and Charity among our Selves.

Can any one despise the Poor, the Captive, and the Oppress'd ? when he considers that his God and Saviour redeem'd him from the greatest Indigence, and truest Slavery ; from the Want of saving Knowledge, and from the heavy Bonds and Chains of Sin. Can any one hate even an Offending Brother, when He considers that his God and Saviour came to Reconcile him to Himself, even then, when he was Guilty of the greatest Offences ?

The whole design of Christianity carries every where with it, such an Universal Appearance of Love and Goodness, not only to wretched but undeserving Creatures, that he who will Act upon the Principles of Christianity, must necessarily be led into all the Acts of the same love and

A Sermon preach'd before

and kindness. And he who acts the contrary, whatever he may profess, is any thing but a true Christian, *He who says he Loves God and hates his Brother St. John tells us is a Lyar* 1 Ep. ch. 4. v. 20.

From hence therefore we may learn, what is the True Foundation of a Christian Charity, it is not a single Duty, a narrow or confin'd Principle, but an Universal and Extensive duty of Religion arising from the Obligations we are sensible we lye under, to our great Creator, and and our Gracious Redeemer, and therefore teaches us to love God for his own sake, to love our Brother for God's Sake. It is a Principle which carries an Universal influence through all our Christian Performances; for says *St. Paul*, 1 Cor. ch. 13. v. 1, 2, 3.

“ Though I speak with the Tongues of Men
 “ and of Angels, and have not Charity, I am
 “ become as sounding Brass, or a Tinckling Cym-
 “ bal. Though I have the Gift of Prophecy,
 “ and understand all Mysteries, and all Knowledge;
 “ and though I have all Faith, so that I could
 “ remove Mountains and have not Charity, I am
 “ Nothing.

“Nothing. Though I bestow all my Goods to
“feed the Poor, and though I give my Body to
“be burnt, and have not Charity, it profiteth me
“Nothing.

It is therefore such a Principle as is absolutely necessary to the right Guidance and Direction of, even the greatest Gifts and Graces of the Holy Spirit; it is such a Principle as is a necessary ingredient for the Completion of all our Christian Offices and Duties here, and such a Principle as will attend us, to the Consummation of our Bliss hereafter; for *when Faith and Hope are done away, yet even then abideth Charity, for the greatest of all is Charity.* From considering therefore the Nature of such an Universal and Exalted Vertue, proceed we in the next place to consider,

Socondly, The Reason of the Apostles restriction of it here. Especially to those of the Household of Faith.

It

It is very observable that the most fatal consequence of Division amongst Christians, is and always has been, the Breach of that common Charity which ought to secure and support the common Faith. That *Faith which was once deliver'd to the Saints*, not that which every New-fangled Opinion would obtrude upon us as such. For the dividing Parties to Vindicate themselves, and support their Credit amongst those they have deluded to their Party, are of necessity oblig'd to charge those they divide from, with something that is Erroneous or unchristian, either in Opinion or Practice, to secure themselves against the charge of causeless Separation, and therefore where ever the *Fault* lies, we are sure to find the *Blame* abundantly thrown upon the Orthodox.

This is the natural Reason of that Uncharitableness which we always find, attends a Separation, for being taught to believe, that there is but one Communion of Saints, one Holy Catholick Church, since Division destroys Unity, the dividing Party must have something to say, to destroy their Adversaries Pretensions to that
Unity

Unity, and assert their own. This Reason is founded upon so plain an Evidence in the Matter of Fact, that we may venture to Appeal to the History of all the Separations that have been made from the Christian Church since its first Establishment, for the Truth of it.

It would be too tedious to make the Deduction here; and therefore I shall only observe further, that This Uncharitableness, which necessarily follows, and flows from the very Nature of Separation has occasion'd to the Church of Christ, whenever they had a sufficient Power for it, though not always as bloody, yet as bitter Persecutions as ever the *Pagans* gave it. For thus every Party sets up for the one Church, and think themselves oblig'd to destroy the Pretensions of all others; and while they thus endeavour to make good their Title to the Household of Faith, become Disorderly and Disobedient Servants in it, and lose the chief Characteristick of true Disciples. For *by this* (says our Saviour) *shall all Men know that Ye are my Disciples, if you have love One for Another.*

And yet even this Enmity must not disappoint the Univerſality of a Chriſtian Charity. We are commanded to Love even theſe Enemies, to doe them all the Good we can, and with a Spirit of Meekneſs correct the Fierceneſs and Fury of their Enmity againſt Us. And yet we muſt take care that this Charity do not betray the Cauſe of God and of Religion; for we are commanded alſo to *contend earneſtly for the Faith which was once deliver'd to the Saints*, and therefore in this Caſe our Charity muſt not extend its ſelf to ſuch a Latitude as may make us Partakers with them in any of their Errors. Nor muſt it lead Us into any guilty Compliance that may injure the Faith we are engaged to Support, even with Contention.

This ſhews us the Reaſon of ſome limitation in the Exerciſe of our Charity: and therefore if we can but fully apprehend what the Apoſtle here means by *the Houſhold of Faith*, we may better underſtand the Reaſon of this Reſtriction.

In this Epiſtle St. Paul do's warmly reprehend the *Galatians* for being deluded by falſe Teachers,
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so *ch.* 1. *v.* 6, 7, 8, 9. "I marvel ye are so soon
"remov'd away unto another Gospel, which is
"not another, save that there be some which
"trouble you, and intend to pervert the Gospel
"of Christ. But though We or an Angel from
"Heaven, Preach unto you otherwise than that
"which we have Preach'd unto you, let him be
"Accursed. As we said before, so say I now
"again, if any Man Preach unto You otherwise,
"than that ye have receiv'd, let Him be Ac-
"curfed.

So that this Epistle was Written upon a Con-
troverfey which *St. Paul* had not with the Unbe-
lieving *Jews*, but with pretended Christians; for
they pretended to the Gospel, though they did
not Preach it Honestly. So that *Faith*, though
it have many Significations in the New Testa-
ment, yet throughout this Epistle is chiefly taken
for the Gospel State, or the Rule or Law of
true Orthodox Christianity, in opposition to
the Righteousness, those false Teachers pretend-
ed to from the Law of Works.

Now Faith taken in this sense, for the Law
of Faith, the Gospel State, or Establishment of

Christianity, is represented both by our Saviour and his Apostles, as a Society acting according to the Laws and Rules prescrib'd them sometimes as a Kingdom; and then in Opposition to the Earthly Rule or Dominion of Temporal Princes, it is call'd the Kingdom of Heaven; sometimes as a great Potentate enjoying large Possessions, and employing many Servants in the Orderly and well dispos'd Management of it, where those who are Disorderly, and Disobedient, such as say, This is the Heir, come let us kill him and take Possession for our selves; when the Lord comes are cast out and destroy'd as wicked Servants. Sometimes as an House, an Household, or Householder: thus in the Text. So also Heb. 3. v. 6. *Christ is as the Son over his own House, whose House we are. And therefore is he said to have more Glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the House, hath more Honour than the House.* So also in the Parable of the Talents, the Master of the House entrusts his Servants with their several shares according to his own Disposition, and expects from them an Account of their Management; and we find the Unprofitable Servant is cast Out.

Now Faith taken in the Gospel State, or Establishment of Faith, the Gospel State, or Establishment of Faith.

Now

Now all these Representations are laid before Us, to let us see that the Church of Christ, or State of Christianity, is a Regular and well order'd Society; where Faith, if it will be such as becomes this Society, must teach us to Act in Conformity to the Rule, Order and Discipline of the Society. We must continue not only in the Apostles Doctrine, but Fellowship too, and those who do not, are not of this Household of Faith.

This is plainly the Apostles meaning by this Form of speech, as may appear sufficiently from what has been before observ'd, viz. That this Epistle was not Written against the Unbelieving Jews, but against such as were really Christians, but yet being troubled by some, such as did endeavour to pervert the Gospel of Christ, and therefore though they pretended to the Faith, yet were not truly of the Household of Faith.

To these indeed there is a Charity due, we are to wish them well, and do any thing for them that may not Encourage them in the Evil of their Schism, and this shews us the Reason
of

of the Apostles Restriction, we are to do them all the Good we can, but this Charity must be extended more especially to those who are of the Household of Faith. For these are truly our Fellow Labourers in the Kingdom of Christ; these are Brethren that dwell together in Unity; such as keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace, such as know how to Obey those who are set over them in the Lord.

For the Law of Christianity was not deliver'd to the World as the Law of *Moses* was, Fenc'd and Guarded, and Secur'd by particular Rules and Constitutions exactly calculated for even the minutest Punctilio's of its Ministration: These Ceremonial Laws were given the *Jews*, as our Saviour tells us, for the hardness of their Hearts.

But our Saviour having done all that was requir'd for the Redemption of fallen Man, and deliver'd all that was Necessary for the Reformation of Mistaken or Corrupted Law, whether Natural or Positive, declares to his Disciples before his Ascension, that all Power was given him both in Heaven, and in Earth, and de.

deriv'd that Power upon them, with the Gift of the Holy Ghost. So that the Substantial part of Christianity, the Foundation being fix'd and laid by our Saviour himself, the Circumstantial part of what might be necessary either for the Decency or Purity of Divine Worship, was left to the Prudential consideration of those to whom he had granted a sufficient Power, for the Building, Planting and Erecting Churches; and promis'd to be with them and their Successors to the End of the World. These were they who were set over Us in the Lord, and those whom We were commanded to Obey, as being thus set over Us.

And the Usage of this Authority we find in a famous Instance of *St. Paul*, for when he had corrected the Mistakes of his Schismatical *Corinthians* concerning the Celebration of the Eucharist; He concludes with these Words, *Other things will I set in Order when I come.* 1 Cor. ch. 11. v. 34. Upon which Words *Beza* himself gives this Note. "Such Things
"as pertain to Order, as Place, Time, Form
"of Prayers, and other such like the Apostle
"took

“ took Order for in Congregations, according to
“ the Consideration of Times, Places and Per-
“ sons. This is what the Catholick Church
has constantly own'd, and what the Church of
England asserts in her Twentieth Article. The
Church has Power to Decree Rites and Ceremo-
nies. And therefore only those who Act in
Obedience to this Authority can properly be
said to be of that Household of Faith which
was Instituted by our Saviour the great Master
of the Family, Propagated by his direction, and
Govern'd under his Influence.

'Tis true these Governours are now, and
have been ever since the Apostles days, Men
that are Fallible, lyable to Error, and may be
Guilty of Mistakes in their Commands. And
in this case we have a good Security allow'd us,
We are allow'd such a Judgment of Discretion
as will direct us to obey God rather than Man;
for the Highest Authority upon Earth can never
oblige me to sin against God Almighty. But
then that Judgment of Discretion must be
built upon sure and certain Grounds. The
Thing commanded, must be Evidently and
Manifestly sinful; for nothing less can excuse
the

the Disobedience. And therefore in things of an indifferant Nature, where only the Honour, the Uniformity and Decency of God's Worship are concern'd; though the things themselves may be in their own Nature Indifferent, yet when they are once Commanded, the Duty of Obedience is not Indifferent. And therefore those who upon these Accounts divide the Unity of the Church of God, though in the Account of some Mens Charity, they may in a large Sence, be said to be of the Household of Faith, yet are they Disorderly and Disobedient Servants in it.

By this then, We may understand the Reason of the Apostles Restriction here; though there is a Charity due to all Men, to Men as such, to Christians as Brethren, To mistaken Uncharitable Christians because still Brethren. Yet is it more especially Due to those Members of the Household of Faith, who under a due Sence of Christian Humility and Obedience, Act in Conformity to the Rule and Order and Discipline of the Household. These are those who do more especially require, our Love and Charity, our Care and Compassion for them.

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And

And now Men Brethren, and Fathers, I hope I may beg leave to bespeak, you all as such Members of the Household of Faith. True Sons, or at least True Servants of that Family and Household, which God will own for His; We are all the Sons of Clergymen, Men call'd to a nearer Office and Administration in the House of God: And therefore It cannot well be suppos'd, that Those whose Duty it was to Instruct others, should let their own Families want that knowledge which is necessary for Them.

The Occasion therefore of our present Meeting is not so much to consider Charity in its Principle or Speculative Notion, as to Exhort one Another to the Use and Exercise of It. As we know 'ts founded in the Love of God, so we know it must be exercis'd among ourselves in all the Acts of Benevolence, Beneficence, and Brotherly Correetion. The last of these, though it carries the hardest Appearance, yet when duly exercis'd is an useful Charity. When One Reproves with Meekness, the Other hears with Patience; 'tis apt to Incline

cline both to a Mutual good will towards each other, and Engage them both in all the good Offices they can perform for one Another.

But the more especial Acts of Charity, We are at present engag'd for, are the Acts of Benevolence and Beneficence. We are in a more especial manner, Brethren; and the Design of this Meeting is to cultivate that mutual Good Will among us, that may make us meet *in the House of God as Friends*, and Unanimously concur in all our Endeavours for the Glory of God and the Assistance of our distressed Brethren.

It is God Almighty's Command to the Jews *Deut. ch. 15. v. 11. Because there shall always be some Poor in the Land, therefore I command thee, saying, thou shalt open thine Hand wide to thy Brother, to thy Needy, and to thy Poor in the Land.*

This Mixture of different Estates, some Rich, some Poor, was, we see the Work of Providence even in a Land flowing with
D 2 Milk

Milk and Hony, therefore we need make no Apology for the Number of Poor Objects we meet with in this Society. Especially if we consider an Expensive Education, to prepare and fit us for the sacred Employment; The Obligations we lie under to the Expectations of the World, both for Hospitality and Charity, and withal the Moderate Competences allow'd for the Support of Them, which in the best are hardly more than Sufficient; but in the Most are in no wise answerable for them.

And if to these we add that even these Emoluments are Personal, and die with the Possessor, it may seem more a Wonder, that we should meet with such a flourishing Appearance here, willing, and able, and ready to give Relief, than that we find so many that may want it. But the Blessings of God must be acknowledg'd; and then they may encrease upon us, as we are not without sufficient Ground to hope they may.

For when the Royal Bounty of our Great, and Good and Gracious Queen shall appear in its Effects as Prince-like, Generous, and Noble as it is in its Design. When the shining Example shall have such an Influence as to Encourage others to the Imitation of it; for the Kindness of our Legislature has not only enabled her, but has let Loose all our hands, for the like Bounty.

We may then find a Goodness that is now Fetter'd and Confin'd by narrow Circumstances, break out in Glorious Vertues, and bring down the Blessings of Heaven, in a still more plentiful manner, upon Our Church, Our Queen, Our Land and all of Us. And therefore let us conclude all with that Prayer, which is appointed for the Collect of this Week;